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## **SEVEN YEAR EXTENSION OF PATRIOT ACT FAILS TO PROTECT READER PRIVACY**

*Washington, DC, November 16, 2005:* The Association of American Publishers (AAP) expressed grave disappointment in the USA PATRIOT Act legislation that emerged from a conference committee today for its failure to improve protection for the reading privacy of ordinary Americans. For more than three years, AAP has been working with booksellers, librarians and authors in the Campaign for Reader Privacy to effect changes to restore privacy safeguards for bookstore and library records that were stripped away with the passage of the original Act in October 2001.

Important changes were sought in Section 215 of the Act, which allows the FBI, on the order of a secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court, to search any records they claim are “relevant” to a terrorism investigation, including bookstore and library records of individuals not suspected of terrorism or espionage. Key among the changes sought was the establishment of a standard of individualized suspicion as the basis for obtaining such records. Such a standard was included in the Senate-passed bill, but rejected today by the conference committee, increasing the possibility of government abuse and “fishing expeditions” into the records of innocent people. The conference committee also failed to provide any meaningful way for a recipient to challenge the secret court order.

The conference committee also rejected the four-year “sunset” approved by the Senate, extending the provision for another seven years and significantly weakening the opportunity for meaningful Congressional oversight.

The conference report is expected to come up for a vote as early as tomorrow. AAP and other advocates for reader privacy are urging members of Congress to reject the report and to send the legislation back to conference.

The Association of American Publishers is the national trade organization of the U.S. book publishing industry. AAP’s approximately 300 members include most of the major commercial book publishers in the United States, as well as smaller and non-profit publishers, university presses and scholarly societies. The Association views the right of

Americans to read freely, without the government's knowledge or intervention, as a fundamental component of our First Amendment right to free speech.

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